Nutrient Data Laboratory Online: Meeting Consumer Needs

V. de Jesus and R. Cutrufelli.

USDA, ARS, Beltsville Human Nutrition
Research Center
Nutrient Data Laboratory
Beltsville, Maryland 20705

Abstract

The primary responsibility of the USDA Nutrient Data Laboratory (NDL) is to provide authoritative nutrient composition data for foods eaten in the United States. Historically, NDL has made this data available in the form of handbooks. Today, the NDL Web site at www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp is our primary vehicle for dissemination of nutrient composition data. The site includes downloadable datasets, tables, previous USDA food composition releases, and the widely used online search tool to access the USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Reference (SR). The search tool has made access to nutrient data easier by eliminating the need to download data files into a database program and allowing visitors without technical expertise to access SR. Our aim is to make data retrieval easier and also to extend the usefulness of our Web site to additional audiences. Use of our Web site is regularly evaluated to determine the number of total Web site hits per month, the number of visitors to our site, and the domains (e.g. .gov and .com) that access our site most frequently. Furthermore, Internet searches are utilized to determine the number of Web sites that provide links to our site. When our users and audience can be identified, we can distinguish which types of data and what kinds of data access are most desired. We can then apply revisions to make the site and the data more accessible to these groups while, at the same time, adding features with new appeal.

Online Data Dissemination

Electronic Access to Nutrient Data: A Timeline

USDA creates first
food composition tables
1896

First individual food
sections printed
1976

NDL web site
goes online
1992

Reports by Single
Nutrients
2001

Home and Garden
Bulletin No. 72
1960

2002…

1956
Handbook No.
102, Food Yields

1980
AH-8 becomes USDA
Nutrient Database for
Standard Reference

1996
Online SEARCH
of SR

1950
USDA Agricultural
Handbook 8 is printed

NUTRIENT DATA LABORATORY

USDA | **ars Agricultural Research Service**

Search the Nutrient Database

Search for values in the USDA Nutrient database for Standard Reference, Release 14

Food Composition Products

Data sets prepared by USDA-ARS's Nutrient Data Laboratory:

- **USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 14**
- **Isoflavones**
- **Carotenoids**
- **Retention Factors**
- **Vitamin K**
- **Trans Fatty Acids**
- **Sugar**
- **Nutritive Value of Foods** (Home and Garden Bulletin No. 72)
- **Key Foods**
- **Classic USDA Food Composition Publications**
- **Oxalic Acid Content of Selected Vegetables**

Information

- **How to Get Information from NDL**
- **FAQs** **(Frequently Asked Questions)**
- **Food Composition and Nutrition Resource Links**
- **Articles by NDL Staff**
- **Glossary**
- **Measurement Conversion Tables**
- **USDA Compiling Food Composition Data for 110**

What's New?

Reports by Single Nutrients containing selected foods from SR14, sorted either by food description or in descending order by nutrient content in terms of common household measures

About NDL

NUTRIENT DATA LABORATORY

USDA — **ars** Agricultural Research Service

Search the USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Reference

This interface allows simple searches. Enter one keyword which best describes your food item or the NDB No and press the enter or return key. If you don't get a match, check your spelling or try a related term. If you get too many items, try a more specific keyword. If you enter two or more keywords, the program will search for items which contain all of the keywords. They do not have to be adjacent or in the same order you entered them.

For more information, including documentation and files for downloading, on SR14.

You can search this index. Type the keyword(s) you want to search for: [   ]

Home   How to get information

USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 14 Files for Downloading

---

All files are compressed using PKZip, **right click here to download pkzip**
Documentation for the database is available either in the main SR14 directory as a clickable html file or in the download files listed here. The documentation is given in both WordPerfect 8 or as a PDF file. PDF files can be read using the Acrobat reader which is available free. To install a PDF viewer in your web browser read, **"Steps to Downloading the Free Acrobat Reader"**

Full version
•**ASCII** (2,276 Kb) - This file contains the SR14 data in delimited files. These file are for importing into a database program on your computer. Using these files will allow the database program to import the files into its own format and give you access to all the features of your database program.
•**ACCESS** (8,125 Kb) - This file contains the SR14 data imported into a MS Access database. It includes relationships between files and a few sample queries and reports. You need MS Access 2000 to use this file.

Abbreviated - This file contains data for a limited number of nutrients for all food items in ASCII format. See the documentation for more information.
•**ASCII** (949 Kb) - delimited file suitable for importing into many programs.
•**Excel** (1,045 Kb) - for use with MS Excel, but can also be used by many other spreadsheet programs.

Update Files - Contains updates for those users who have loaded Release 13 into their own computers and wish to do their own updates.
•**ASCII** (1,045 Kb) - delimited file suitable for import into many programs

Identification of Audience
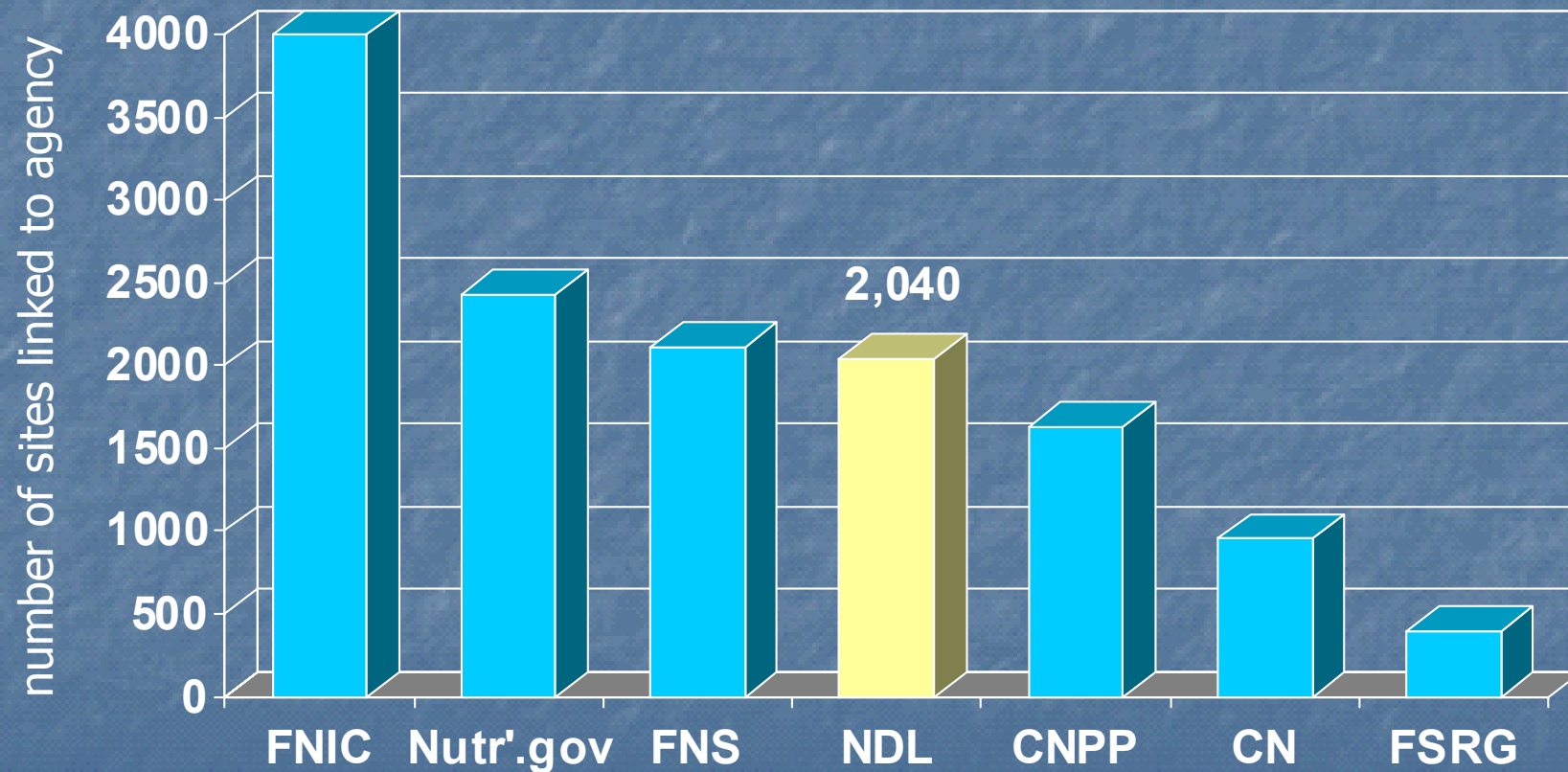
Points of Visitor Access

29.16% .com
23.91% .net
5.85% .edu
1.08% .org
0.98% .gov
0.71% .mil
15.28% int'l
23.03% unresolved
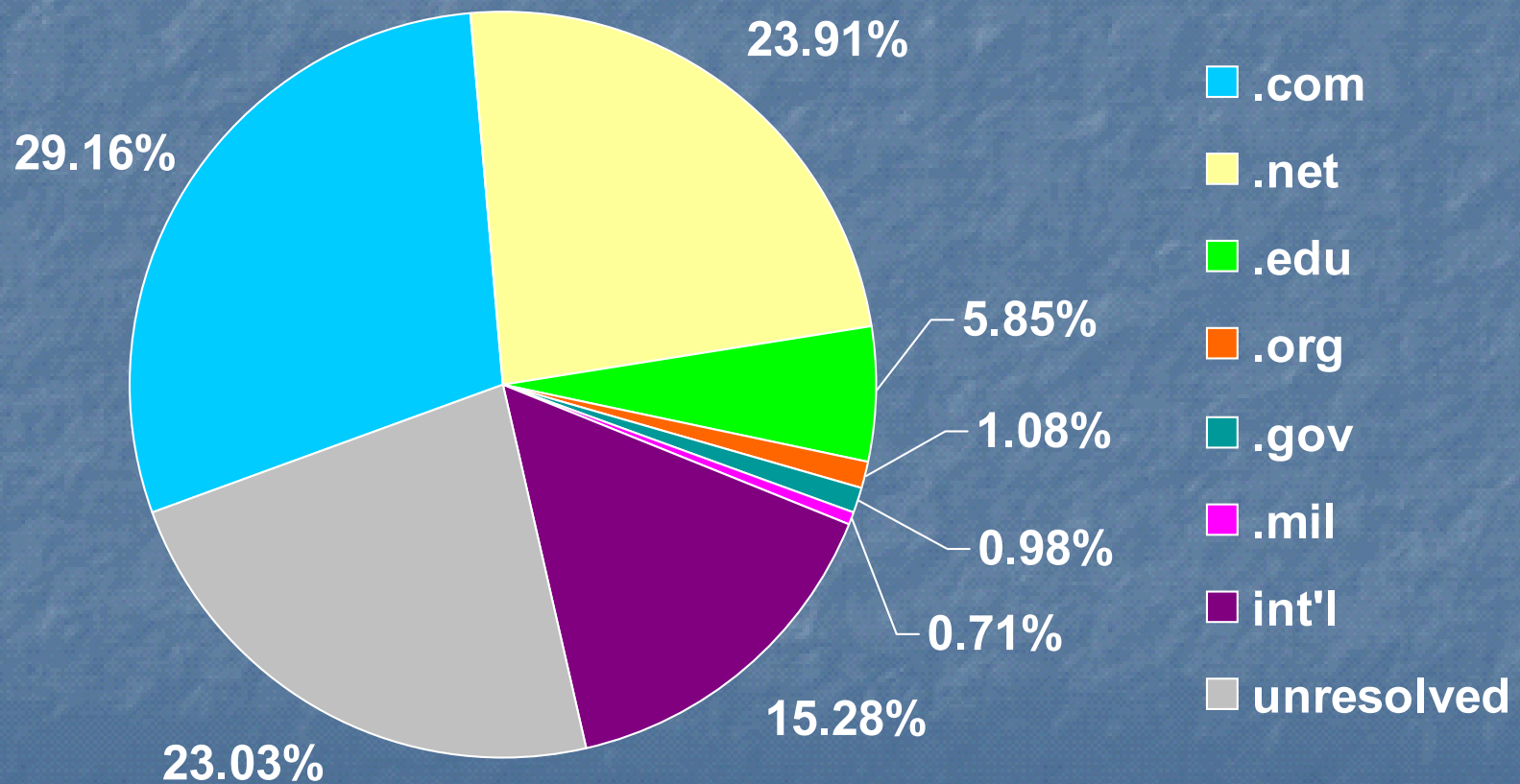
Most Frequent International Visitors

1. Canada
2. Australia
3. Brazil
4. United Kingdom
5. Spain

6. Italy
7. Netherlands
8. Argentina
9. Japan
10. New Zealand

Examples of Sites That Link to NDL

- **Government:** National Institutes of Health
- **News/Media:** CNN
- **Web Portals:** Yahoo!
- **Medical:** Mayo Clinic
- **Academic:** Johns Hopkins University
- **Associations:** Institute of Food Technologists
- **Industry:** National Cattlemen's Beef Association

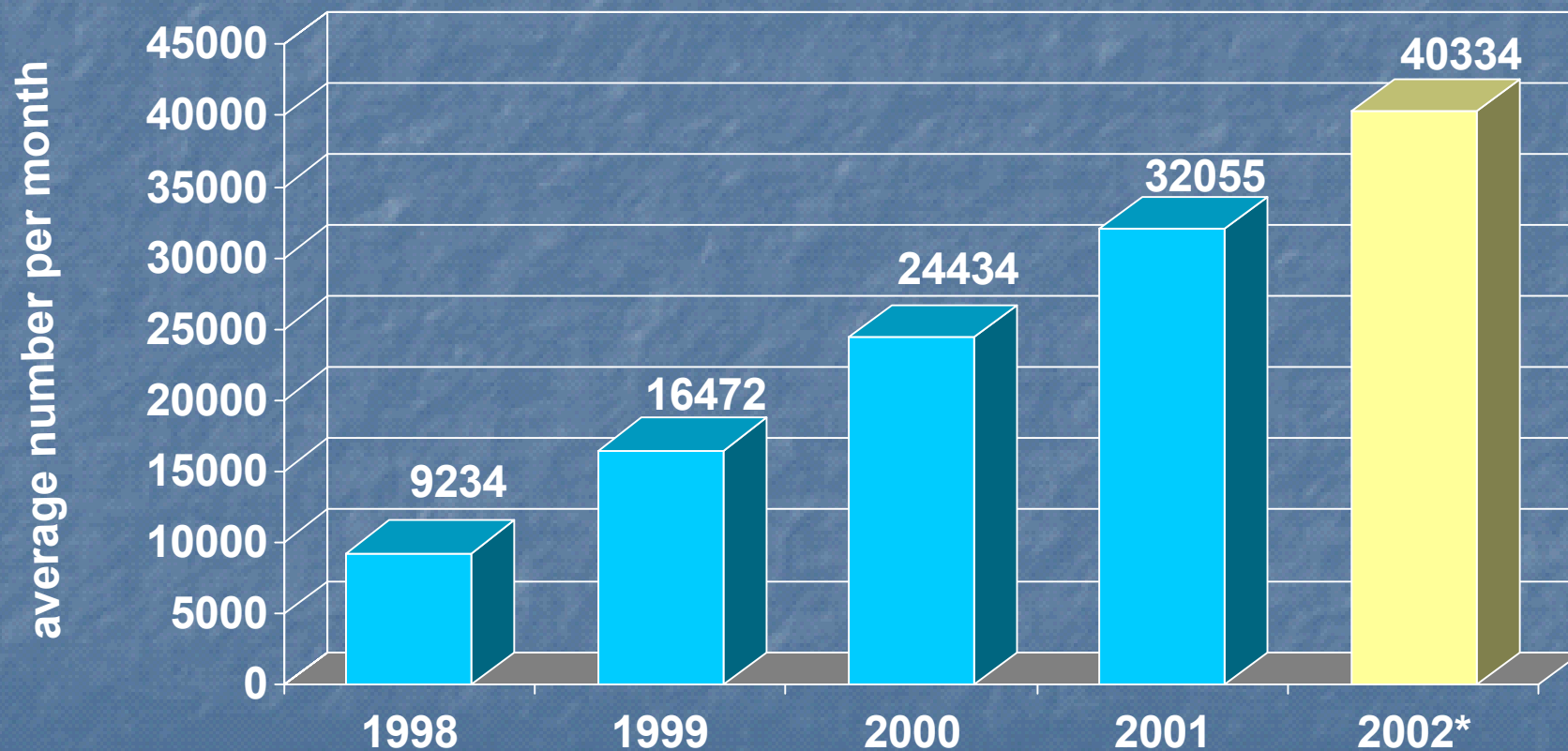# Links to NDL Compared to Other USDA Agencies

Bar chart: number of sites linked to agency

- FNIC: ~4000
- Nutr'.gov: ~2400
- FNS: ~2050
- NDL: 2,040
- CNPP: ~1600
- CN: ~900
- FSRG: ~350

*using standard search engine

Use of Web Site

Most Accessed Pages

1. NDL Homepage

2. Food Composition Products

3. SR14 Main Page

4. How to Get Information from NDL

5. Reports by Single Nutrients

6. Food Composition and Nutrition Links

7. SR14 Downloadable Files

8. HG72 Data

9. SR14 pdf Reports

10. Frequently Asked Questions

Most Requested Single Nutrient Reports

1. Protein
2. Fat
3. Energy (Calories)
4. Carbohydrate
5. Moisture

6. Iron
7. Total Dietary Fiber
8. Calcium
9. Potassium
10. Cholesterol

Examples of Web Site Improvements

- **Revised Homepage**

    Clearer site organization, easier to navigate

- **Enhanced SR Search function**

    Commonly used food names now included

- **Reports by Single Nutrients**

    Identifies foods with highest nutrient content

- **Expanded FAQs**

    Addressing new concerns of consumers